5. (Currently Amended) An elevator apparatus for manipulating well bore tubing having a collar, comprising:

a circular body having a top and a central cavity around a body axis, the cavity having a diameter allowing the collar portion of tubing to pass longitudinally therethrough,

a plurality of petal plates having radially inner and outer portions, horizontally supported on and spaced apart around the top of the body, and

one or more actuators operatively associated with the petal plates, for moving each petal plate radially inward, substantially normal to the body axis, over the body, into the cavity, an extent sufficient, in combination with the other petal plates so extended, to prevent passage of the collar portion of the tubing through the cavity, thereby to hold the tubing with the elevator, in which said body is a fulcrum for the petal plates when they are extended into the cavity and hang tubing within the elevator, and wherein the elevator apparatus further comprises a counterforce member in operative arrangement with the petal plates for opposing leverage imparted over said fulcrum to the portion of the petal plates radially outward from said body, wherein the counterforce member is a circular member surrounding the cavity, spaced radially outward from the body and at least partially located above and adjacent the outer portion of the petal plates at least when they are extended into the cavity.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently amended) The elevator apparatus of Claim [6] 5 in which said circular member is secured by one or more buttresses fixed relative to the body below the petal plates.

8. (Previously presented) The elevator apparatus of Claim 7 in which a plurality of buttresses are interposed between the spaced apart petal plates.

9. (Previously presented) The elevator apparatus of Claim 5 in which said one or more actuators also operate to retract the proximal portions of the petal plates radially out of the cavity, to allow the collar portion of the tubing to pass through the cavity.

10. (Previously presented) The elevator apparatus of Claim 9 in which the actuator comprises a cam and the petal plate is a cam follower.

11. (Previously presented) The elevator apparatus of Claim 10 in which the cam is received in an aperture in the petal plate between the inner and outer portions of the petal plate.